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LOG OF MEETING

Subject: Open Flame Testing of Mattress and Furniture

Date of Meeting: September 13, 1994

Place: Consumer Product Safety Commission, Bethesda, MD

Non-Commission Representatives:
Harrison Murphy, Ventex (seminar presenter)
Bob Neithercott, Serta Mattress
Harold Dunnagan, Dixie Yarns, Inc
Pat Martin, Sleep Products Safety Council & ISPA
Russ Batson, American Furniture Manufacturers Assoc.
Nick Wakeman, Product Safety Letter

Commission Representatives:
James F. Hoebel, ES
Dale R. Ray, EC
Linda Smith, EP
Sue Cassidy, EP
Debbie Tinsworth, EPHA
Pat Fairall, Compliance
George Sushinsky, Laboratory Sciences
Lakshmi Mishra, HS
Allen F. Brauninger, OGC
Shiela Kelly, EPHA

Log Entry Source: James F. Hoebel

Summary of Meeting: Mr. Murphy provided the following presentation. He reviewed an analysis of fire statistics based on "1991 Residential Fire Loss Estimates," Linda Smith, CPSC, September 16, 1993, and other NFPA data. The analysis showed the relative risk of fire death is greater for the elderly, that deaths per 1000 home fires remained fairly constant at a high rate, and demonstrated the particular severity of furniture and mattress fires.

He emphasized that residential fires spread rapidly. Flashover represents the point at which a fire becomes very deadly. Controlling the peak rate of heat release would help prevent a fire from reaching flashover.

Standards already exist based on the control of peak rate of heat release, including California 129, Boston FD 9-11, and California 133. Technology also exists to enable furniture and mattresses to meet these standards. This technology includes fire barrier materials.

Options now available to address mattress/furniture fires include a)banning conventional polyurethane foam, as was done in the UK, but this is costly and comfort is adversely affected, b)do nothing, and allow private litigation to eventually influence the safer construction of products, or c) develop a standard to limit the peak rate of heat release.